

All To Play For

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Back to Buckingham, where decidedly the die is not yet cast.

Our man in the frame is in ebullient form, notwithstanding having set a pace for many months now that would have crushed plenty of younger men. Fresh from his immigration inquisition by Andrew Neil, he is ready to go out on the stump.

His take on where UKIP is in Buckingham? Still too close to call, the potential result masked by the intervention of nearly a dozen independents. Nonetheless a strong sense of momentum, which is why he is raring to get the teams out on the road for one last push. The game is still afoot.

UKIP nationally? A good feeling here that we have been putting in a strong performance. Certainly if our street work later is anything to go by, UKIP's message is getting across to all types of voter. Nigel also ponders on the degree to which voting UKIP is no longer a one-off protest vote but has become a matter of habit: this election should, he feels, prove that June 2009 was no flash in the pan.

Has he enjoyed the contest? Do ducks swim? His unbounded enthusiasm tells you that this fight has been one to enjoy. Being a natural campaigner and also being at ease with the attentions of the press, the response of the voters had been reward enough. It has, he adds, been great fun: now when did you last hear one of our careerist chums from the Old Parties looking as though they were enjoying being on the end of a public kebab?

High point? Going down Bridge Street in Buckingham and passing the New Inn whose occupants, suitably oiled, spot him in the street and erupt in enthusiastic banging on the windows. Inside a beery, cheery welcome, not least from the ample lady in the Bulldog T-shirt (what else?). This has become a UKIP outpost.

The Murdoch press's behaviour? Times sketch writer Anne Treneman is in town and will write her usual good stuff, but the recent [Laughable Leader](#) and the [Camilla Long](#) piece (that stooped so low as to make the gutter seem lofty) remain a puzzle: why would an allegedly great newspaper demean itself with such stuff? To the candidate, who was rightly enraged by the deeply offensive and personal nature of the Long diatribe, the Murdoch thing is inexplicable, 'extraordinary'. Perhaps Murdoch fears that his new chums in the Tory Party (replacing his old chums in the Labour Party) will be discombobulated by our man…….

That 'Eurostat' moment when Labour's very own pig's bladder, Phil Woolas (Minister for The Open Door), was skewered by deft use of the enemy's own figures concerning UK immigration and emigration? Loved it, says Nigel, and the moment when he got to insert the 'closet racists' accusation under the skin of Damien Green was a bonus. And the Lib Dumb? Nigel cannot remember his name, any more than can anyone else.

The outcome? He has no more idea than the rest of us save for a strong sense that things will not be the same after Thursday for the conventional alignments of British politics. Nigel's sense is that we might well be on the cusp of a major upheaval, particularly if 'first past the post' goes by the board. After all, he asks, what sort of party is it that can cover all the ground from Ken Clarke to Norman Tebbit?

Most interesting development? The upcoming possibility that Cameron may find himself skewered on the blade of a demand for a referendum on Lisbon if the EU goes ahead with its plan to amend the treaties to fix the problem of the number of MEPs left in the wake of the late ratification of Lisbon.

UKIP MEPs

<http://www.ukipmeps.org>

Then out onto the streets with two teams of canvassers. We are accompanied by some charming Danes who want to get a look at the phenomenon that is Nigel Farage.

To cut a long story short, our late afternoon and early evening in what might be thought of as otherwise typically Labour areas is a great success and a considerable fillip for our man. The response is overwhelmingly polite and for the very most part going UKIP's way. The best moment? A Postie declaiming as if he were Churchill on the reasons for his vote for UKIP.

All agree that this has been a highly useful last push. The personal touch with Nigel is the thing: to see the pleasure of some of our fellow citizens that they have this outspoken man on their doorstep is a tonic.

Good luck, Nigel: go get Bercow!

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